

April 25, 2007

**Statement of Congressman Pete Stark
In Support of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act**

I'm pleased that we are finally passing the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act.

This is a bill that has languished in Congress more than a decade. The Senate has twice passed earlier versions of this bill with unanimous votes, but the House has always blocked action.

It's good to see that times have changed. Members from both sides of the aisle – as well as the President support the bill before us.

As I hope most of you know, this bill does something very simple, but something very important as well. It protects people's genetic information and family history from being used by health plans or employers to discriminate against them. Enactment of this law is critical to protect patients and for genetic science to advance.

Recent breakthroughs in medical science have made genetic testing available to more patients, but with these breakthroughs comes the fear that patients may be discriminated against by insurance companies and/or employers if they are pre-disposed to suffer from a disease or other condition.

We're here today to make sure that patients can undergo genetic tests which could help with treatments or cures without fear that the results will keep them from affordable, reliable health care.

This legislation is an overdue and important step toward ensuring that our laws governing patient rights are as current as the latest medical technology.

I urge strong support for this bill.